

The Mountain Divide

light flashed out of the darkness at his very side and he felt himself seized as if by a giant and wrenched away from where he stood and through the air.

He heard a quick exclamation, saw a lighted lantern fall to the ground, felt a stinging pain in his right foot, and knew no more.

When he recovered consciousness, three lanterns shone in his eyes. He was lying in the mud near the switch with the engine crew standing over him. One of the men knelt at his side and he saw the thin, strong features of a face he had seen among the railroad men, but one that he knew then he was never to forget—the face of the yardmaster, Callahan. Callahan knelt in the storm with a good-natured expression. The men about the yardmaster were less kindly.

“Who are you, tar heels?” demanded the engineman angrily.

Resentment, which would have been quick in the operator a little earlier, had died in the few moments in which he had faced death. He answered only in the quietest way: